interface shown in FIG. 6, it is understood that all the goods are to be collected at once or not to be collected at all. The collection flag information is sent from the terminal 41 to the main server 81 in a manner similar to

5 the one described above.

Also, the collection rate described above is calculated for each user from information about the quantity of goods (consumables) shipped to the user by the main server 81 based on information such as the one shown

10 in FIG. 20 and about the quantity collected out of the shipped products. A display example of the calculated collection rate is shown in 105 in FIG. 9 or 104 in FIG. 6

The expected collection date will be described later.

15 The collection date is the date on which collection was actually performed. The Collection Completed flag indicates whether collection was actually performed.

Upon receiving the collection information, the main server 81 updates the collection history for the user ID

20 in the order receipt information in Step S64. Then, when goods receipt information of the collected cartridges is received from the terminal 61 of the branch warehouse 6 in Step S65, the main server 81 updates the collection information in Step S66. When goods issue information of

25 the collected cartridges is received from the terminal 61 of the branch warehouse 6 in Step S67, the main server 81 updates the collection information in Step S68. When

arrival information of the collected cartridges is received from the terminal 71 of the collection center 7 in Step S69, the main server 81 updates the collection information in Step S70 (e.g., turns on the Collection Completed flag).

5

● Preparation of recycling plan

FIG. 21 shows an example of a recycling schedule table. The main server 81 calculates the expected daily collection quantity, based on the purchase history (shipment arrival

10 date/time) of toner cartridges yet to be collected, product-specific sale-to-collection period, and collection flag. The calculation is performed for each user. Suppose, for example, a user purchased toner cartridges XXX on September 1. If the product-specific

15 sale-to-collection period, which is the average of the periods between the date of toner cartridge sale to the user and the date of collection, is 90 days, it is expected that the toner cartridges will be collected on December 1. This is made possible by managing sales and collection by the

20 same number. According to this method, it is possible to calculate the expected collection quantity on a daily basis by estimating the collection dates of all the toner cartridges yet to be collected with respect to the users whose collection flag is set to Yes. Also the accuracy of

25 prediction can be further improved by calculating the product-specific sale-to-collection periods of each customer.

The expected collection quantities determined in this way can be used effectively in drawing up medium-term plans. For example, recycling plants can work out plans for arranging for personnel, securing work areas, purchasing

5   necessary equipment, arranging for necessary supplies/tools, arranging for necessary parts, securing a storage site for recycled goods, etc., based on a medium-term production plan. Also, in warehouses (master and branch whorehouses), plans for storage sites can be

10   drawn up by making out the quantity of collected goods in advance.

FIG. 22 shows a flowchart of detailed processes for generating schedule information such as the one shown in FIG. 21. The processes of the steps in the flowchart of

15   FIG. 22 are carried out as the CPU 1501 executes processes based on the program code stored in the main storage or auxiliary storage of the main server 81. These processes are performed through collaboration between the DB 8 storing various data and the main server 81.

20   In S2201, a search is carried out by referencing Completed flags managed being associated with shipping/collection ticket numbers which in turn are managed being associated with "product names and model numbers" not yet collected.

25   In S2202, concerning the products not yet collected, it is judged whether they are associated with collection service registration information, and the products